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Double Issue: Japanese Christians and the Environment

EDITORIAL

I am listening to what the Lord God is saying; God promises peace to us, God's people, if we do not go back to our foolish ways. (Psalm 85:8)

We live in a sacramental universe, yet we damage and destroy the earth daily now through war, violence, depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, and of course, fear. We are called to be peacemakers, and to respect all creation and every life on this earth. Yet we destroy the environment in which we live.

This issue of JCAN was started before war broke out, but environmental issues are even more pressing in these days and times. War touches the hearts and lives of everyone, East and West. In Japan there have been prayer meetings, petitions and demonstrations for peace. "How long, O Lord, how long?" we cry, with tears in our eyes and pain in our hearts.

We pray that every human being in every country may be safe and free from the fear of brutality, injustice, oppression, hatred, war, and violence. Our Creator God calls us in Christ to love one another and respect the world in which we live.

We need comprehensive peace and lasting justice. The psalmist says, "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; justice and peace will kiss each other." (Ps. 85:10)

NCCJ calls upon all people to raise their voices in sustained and earnest prayer to the God of all Love and Mercy. We urge you to pray not only that war and hatred stop but that God will be gracious and open the minds of world leaders and all humanity to recognize the rights of others. We urge you to pray for our broken humanity.

The Editor

Contents

	page		page
Environmental Workshop in Japan Pursues the Roles of Seminaries and Churches with Respect to the Environment	2	of the Japan Baptist Convention (JBC)	9
Book review: <i>Ox Against the Storm</i>	3	The Japan YWCA Movement to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and Phase Out Nuclear Power	10
Former Concentration Camp for Chinese Workers at Ashio	3	The Human Environment in Crisis: Focus on Chemical Pollutants	12
A History of the Christian Environmental Movement in Japan	4	News from the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions	16
Environmental Programs of Tokyo YMCA	7	Obituaries	17
The Committee for Environmental Issues and Public Nuisances as an Environmental Program		I Can No Longer Be With You: A Painful Message to My Friends from Yayori Matsui	18
		NCCJ Calendar Highlights	20

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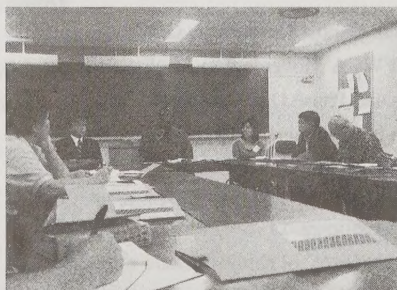
Environmental Workshop in Japan Pursues the Roles of Seminaries and Churches with Respect to the Environment

CCA and NCCJ Hold Environmental
Training Workshop 2002 in Tokyo and
Saitama, Japan

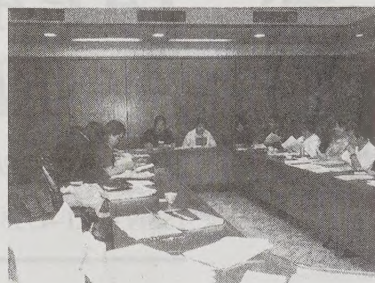
Nineteen participants from different Christian organizations, seminaries and churches in seven Asian countries, including five Japanese participants and organizers, and from South Africa, came together from September 23 to 27, 2002 to share their experiences and views on environmental stewardship.

In the opening worship, Rev. Sipo Mtetwa of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) emphasized that God demands that we choose by asking, "Which God are we going to serve? The God of the rich or God of the poor? The God of sustainable development or God of sustainable community?" referring to Joshua 24.

On a field trip during the workshop, participants visited a former copper mining town called Ashio, in Tochigi Prefecture 110 km north of Tokyo, where they saw and learned about a historic copper mine that caused serious air and water pollution from sulfur dioxide. Rivers, forests and some communities in the area were polluted and destroyed by sulfuric acid over more than a century, despite efforts by the government and a non-profit organization to restore the local environment. Much of the area remains deforested.



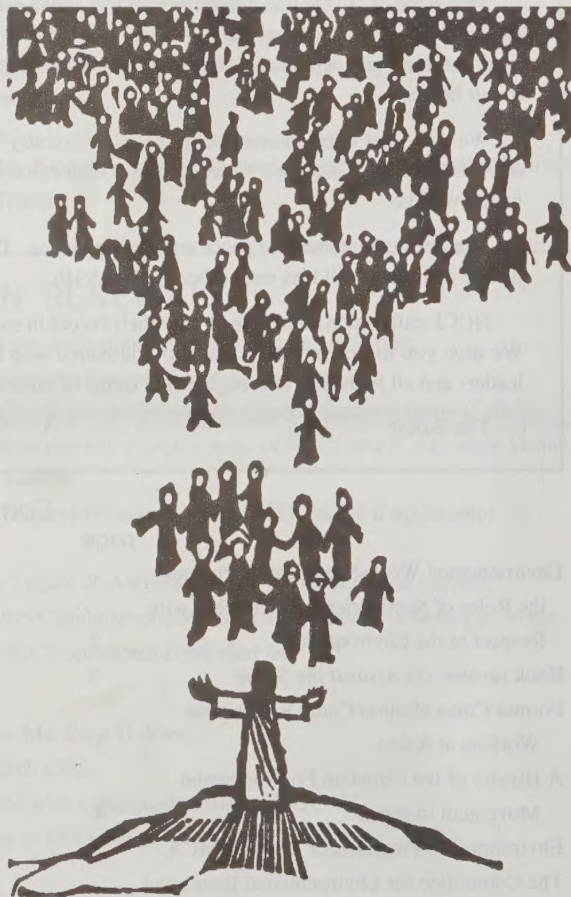
Rev. Sipo giving his homily at the opening worship at the Korean YMCA in Tokyo.



Japanese participants making their presentations at the National Women's Education Center in Saitama, Japan.

The participants also learned about Shozo Tanaka, the pioneer of Japanese environmentalism who fought against the Ashio pollution before he turned to Christ at the end of his life, though he was never baptized (see book review opposite).

The workshop was organized jointly by Rev. Toshi Yamamoto, NCCJ Executive Secretary for international relations, and Dr. Prawate Khid-arn, Development and Service Secretary of CCA.



Kimiyoshi Endo, Vine and Branches

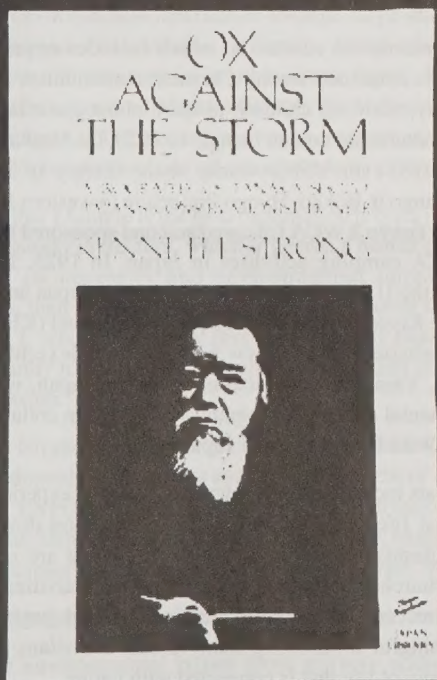
Book Review

Kenneth Strong, *Ox Against the Storm. A Biography of Tanaka Shozo - Japan's Conservationist Pioneer*

(Hardcover edition published 1985 by Hyperion Books, New York. Paperback edition published 1995 by Japan Library, Folkestone, UK.)

Shozo Tanaka (1841-1913) led demands for protection of the environment against air and water pollution that arose from Ashio Copper Mine in Tochigi Prefecture, Japan, at the turn of the twentieth century. This biography - the first on Shozo Tanaka in English - is a study of his life, philosophy and faith. Toward the end of a lifetime of action based on his own personal principles, he discovered a faith in Christianity. This is evidenced by a confession of faith in his diary (quoted in this biography) and the New Testament that he carried with him just before his death.

Notes: According to the oriental zodiac, 1841 was the Year of the Ox. The names of all the Japanese mentioned in this book are given in the Japanese order (surname first).



Former Concentration Camp for Chinese Workers at Ashio

[The following is an unofficial excerpt from the Japanese original of Murayama, Yasumasa, Dozan no Machi Ashio wo Aruku (Walking Through Ashio, A Copper-Mine Town), Zuiso-sha Publishing Co., 1998, p. 132, by Hisashi Yukimoto.]

According to a note by Toshio Takahashi, the Koa Dormitory was surrounded by walls that were twice as high as a person, with palisades set above them. Outside the walls was a 50-meter cliff. Three policemen and three security guards kept watch on the dormitory, which was used as a concentration camp for Chinese workers forced into labor, and two more guards were stationed where they could watch over the entire concentration camp.

When the workers started and finished the day's work, security guards would walk in front of and behind them in a line from the concentration camp to the entrance of the mine.

It is regrettable that strict management by the military and the police, and the fact that these Chinese were forcibly brought to the mine, worsened the relationship between China and Japan.

...

It was toward the end of the Pacific War (1941-1945) and after that the dormitory was used as a concentration camp for Chinese people who were forcibly brought there to work for a year, primarily in the Kotaki Mine.

On the "Double Tenth" anniversary of October 10, 1945, a memorial ceremony and a meeting were held at the Sentoku-ji Temple to console the spirits of the dead Chinese victims. Soon after, however, a dispute occurred over the way they were treated during the war, which was ultimately resolved by the United States, which at that time was occupying Japan.

After that the dormitory was reused, but when the company that operated the Kotaki Mine withdrew, the compound disappeared. It cannot be seen today and bears no resemblance to its past incarnation, as the area has been forested.

The issue of the Chinese who were forcibly taken away by Japan has not yet been solved, despite continual efforts beginning around 1950. But when the Ashio Copper Mine closed down, a monument to the Chinese victims was erected in 1973, with the names of 109 of the Chinese victims engraved on it, at the initiative of the Japan-China Friendship Association.

A History of the Christian Environmental Movement in Japan

By Hisashi Yukimoto

1. Introduction

The UN World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which was held in Johannesburg from August 26 to September 4, 2002, was not a major focus among Christians in Japan, as was the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, mainly because the latter event received much stronger coverage by the mass media. The only identifiable reaction to the WSSD process came in the form of comments on the Chairman's Paper for the 2nd Preparatory Committee for the WSSD that were sent by the NCCJ to the WCC delegation.

The comments consisted of four major sections:

- (a) the general concept of "sustainable development";
- (b) the four major focuses of the WCC, including Southern Africa, indigenous peoples, economic globalization, and climate change;
- (c) peace and nuclear issues and "sustainable development";
- (d) theological reflections.

Other than these comments, however, nothing has been done among Christian communities to examine and evaluate the ten-year process since the Earth Summit, despite the fact that Japan has had a serious impact on the environment. There has been no major debate on "sustainable development" and no Japanese were invited to join the WCC delegation. Nor did any Japanese churches or Christian organizations participate in the WSSD. This is in stark contrast with the time when the Earth Summit was a major concern among Christian communities in Japan and a spark for public debate.

So far, Christian environmental efforts in Japan have not been prominent, compared with those of international environmental NGOs. Moreover, these days Japanese churches are tending toward an increasingly inward focus. The WSSD may therefore have been regarded by many Christians in Japan as a distant, abstract event that is irrelevant to them.

But it would not be true to say that Christians in Japan have done nothing on development and environmental issues. If we look back on the history of the Christian environmental movement in Japan, we see many examples. Let us therefore turn to God, and learn from the faith and practices of our predecessors. By doing so, we can surely pursue the connection be-

tween Christianity in Japan and the WSSD as well as anticipate future challenges.

2. The History of the Christian Environmental Movement

(a) Shozo Tanaka (1841-1913), the pioneer of Japanese environmentalism, and his Christian supporters

Shozo Tanaka was a man who dedicated his life to addressing the issue of poisoning at Ashio Copper Mine in Tochigi Prefecture, which is 110 km north of Tokyo. This incident is often regarded as the starting point for environmental issues in Japan. It has been pointed out in Japanese literature that Tanaka was attracted to Christianity and took the faith as a model for his life, although he was not baptized. There were also a number of Christians who supported his efforts on the Ashio Copper Mine poisoning issue. At that time, Japan was undergoing a government modernization policy called "Rich Country, Strong Military" and the Ashio Copper Mine suffered from what would today be called "unsustainable development." The nearby Watarase River was heavily polluted with copper waste; even today, the mountains and trees surrounding the mine are bare of trees and the livelihood of Yanaka village, which lies downstream, has been destroyed. Shozo and his Christian supporters lived in solidarity with the victims of the pollution, which may have significant implications both for countries facing similar problems and for the worldwide Christian environmental movement.

(b) Experiencing nature and environmental education

Environmental education, which includes experiencing nature, has continued among Christian communities in Japan until today, allowing children to learn about the relationship between nature and human beings. In 1920, the Osaka YMCA held the first-ever YMCA camp in the history of Japan at Mount Nango in Rokko, Hyogo Prefecture in western Japan. In 1931, the Tokyo YWCA followed suit and sponsored the earliest YWCA camping activities in Japan. In 1925, Dr. Paul Rusch of the U.S. Episcopal Church came to Japan and established the Kiyosato Education Experiment Project (KEEP, English website: <http://www.KEEP.or.jp/indexe.html>) in Kiyosato, Yamanashi Prefecture, in central Japan, where an environmental education program was started in collaboration with the Wild Bird Society of Japan in 1986.

Retreats including the enjoyment of nature, experiencing a communal lifestyle, deepening one's faith, and developing deeper friendships while in a natural setting are common among churches in Japan. Although these activities do not have a direct connection with "sustainable development," they are meaningful in allowing many urban Christians to learn about a way of life that is connected with nature.

(c) Pollution issues in post-war Japan

A few Christians have addressed pollution issues in post-war Japan. For instance, in August 1971, Rev. Kano Matsumoto, then priest of Choshi Anglican Church in eastern Japan, headed a group called "The Citizen's Group to Protect Choshi from Pollution." The group was able to prevent the construction of a thermoelectric power plant, which had been a source of concern because of potential air and water pollution.

There is also the example of Father Edward Brzostowski of Asada Catholic Church who was involved in a lawsuit by victims of air pollution in the industrial area of Kawasaki, Kanagawa Prefecture, near Tokyo Bay, and who was awarded the Muneaki Tajiri Award in 1996 for his efforts. The award is given every year by a foundation established in memory of the late Muneaki Tajiri, who is so well known in Japan for his work on pollution problems that he was called the "G-man of Pollution."

Many articles by pastors and lay persons on pollution in Japan have appeared in connection with churches and faith in *Fukuin to Sekai* ("Gospel and World"), a Japanese Protestant monthly magazine. Articles have ranged from Tamio Kawakami's article, "Identification of Pollution-Related Diseases" in October 1968, to Ryuzo Kamino's article, "Japan as an Archipelago of Pollution that Disregards Human Rights" in the November issue of the magazine of 1974.

(d) Large-scale development projects and environmental destruction

Some Christians in Japan have been involved in efforts to prevent environmental destruction through large-scale development projects. For example, on Tarama Island, which is part of Okinawa Prefecture in southwestern Japan, Kiyohiko Nakaoji, then-pastor of Miyako Church, the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ), was involved in a campaign to oppose the development of a crude oil storage base in 1978.

Another example is the land reclamation project in Isahaya Bay, Nagasaki Prefecture, which triggered a heated public debate on its necessity and environmental impact. Yuzo Moritani, then-pastor of Nagasaki Peace Memorial Church of the UCCJ, who was heavily involved with this issue, writes: "Christianity today seems to be silent to these kind of environmental issues."

The Nippon Sei Ko Kai (NSKK, the Anglican Church of Japan) adopted "A Statement to Call for a Review of the International EXPO 2005 Aichi Project and Conservation of Nature" at its 52th General Assembly in May 2000, based on mission principles set out by the Lambeth Conference '98.

(e) Nuclear Issues and the Environment

The environmental issues most actively addressed by Christians in Japan are probably those of nuclear power and weapons. During the 1960s and 70s, some Japanese Christians

started to have doubts about the peaceful use of atomic power. Since then, the nuclear issue has been addressed by such Christian groups as the YWCA, UCCJ's Social Affairs Committee, Special Committee on Pollution Issues of Japan Baptist Convention, Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, and NCCJ. The latter has issued a "Statement to Oppose Nuclear Power Generation" in collaboration with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. It is notable that the NCCJ Nuclear Issues Committee (now known as the Peace and Nuclear Issues Committee) and the Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace called for the suspension of Japan's project to dump nuclear waste in the sea near the Mariana Islands.

Christians in Japan have organized anti/post-nuclear power movements and supported victims of nuclear accidents such as those at Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, and Tokai Village. Supporting these causes has given environmentally aware Christians in Japan significant momentum. In 1993, the Interfaith Forum for Review of the National Nuclear Policy was established to address issues such as nuclear power-related facilities and nuclear reactors where workers have been exposed to radiation, and continues to address these issues today.

(f) Militarism and the environment

Militarism and the environment has been a major issue for churches with members who live in the vicinity of military bases and Christians who act in solidarity with them. This includes issues such as noise pollution from military aircraft, toxic wastes discovered on military bases, the environmental impact of the plan to relocate the U.S. Air Force Base at Futenma, Okinawa Prefecture, and so forth. Some Christians in Japan have expressed their concern about the impact of war on the environment, especially the Gulf War. These concerns were reflected in NCCJ's message to the WCC delegation team to the 2nd Preparatory Committee for the WSSD in March 2002, and adopted by the delegation.

(g) Transnational environmental issues

In the 1970s, some Christians in Japan started to address transnational environmental issues such as the export of pollution by Japanese companies to the Philippines and other countries, and the negative impact of Japanese official development assistance (ODA) projects on society and the environment. Examples of this include Father Keizo Yamada of the Catholic Church of Japan and Rev. Munetoshi Maejima of the UCCJ, who expressed their concerns about what they perceived as exporting pollution to the Philippines. (Kawasaki Steel Cooperation, a Japanese steel manufacturer, tried to construct a factory in the Philippines after it was unable to do so in Chiba Prefecture, east of Tokyo, because of strict environmental regulations.) The Nagoya Youth Center of the NSKK has conducted study tours to the Philippines every year, as a result of its former General Secretary, Kei Ikezumi, having seen this exporting of pollution with her own eyes.

In 1986, the Second Consultation between the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and the NCCJ was held in the Philippines. Rev. Yuji Kanzaki, an NSKK priest, was among the participants in the working group on the environment, where he learned about the danger of polluted water stored and discharged from the Pasar Copper Smelter and Refinery complex in Isabel region, Leyte Island, some 530 kilometers southeast of Manila. Local residents were forced out of the area and labor unions oppressed by the increasing power of the military. "The tragedy of Ashio will be repeated here," he wrote in the NSKK's newspaper.

In 1997, some Christians volunteered to help remove crude oil that polluted the coastal area of the Japan Sea (also known as the "East Sea" in Korean) when a Russian oil tanker sank. Among the volunteers was Rev. Masaru Uegaki, pastor of Fukui Shinmei Church of the UCCJ, who helped the clean-up operation alongside his church members. During Sunday worship services and Wednesday prayer meetings, he would hold a time of prayer on the theme, "The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it" (Psalm 24:1). "Working on the removal of oil while keeping the words, 'The earth is the LORD's' in mind is not merely work but is a prayer," Rev. Uegaki told the Japanese Christian newspaper, *The Christ Weekly*.

(h) Global environmental issues

Public awareness of global environmental issues became widespread in the 1980s, and some Christians in Japan addressed the issue of desertification. Aiko and Shigemi Oka, a couple who are members of the Hiroshima Lutheran Church, started the One Tree Greenery Movement in the mid-1980s to plant trees in Africa to prevent desertification. The Okas maintain that "Violating the earth that was created by God is a blasphemy."

Another example is Sister Yoko Amano, a sister of the Society of the Helpers of Mary of the Catholic Church of Japan who lived from 1992 in the Republic of Chad as a missionary for 11 years. Upon her return this year from that country, which is suffering from desertification, she said, "I want you people (in Japan) to have a sense of the fact that the waste of resources and consumerism in our daily lives causes global warming and environmental destruction, affecting people in countries in trouble that are far away from and invisible to you and threatening others' lives."

On the issue of biodiversity and endangered species, Shunpei Kanbe, a Japanese Christian veterinarian living in Kenya, has called on the Japanese to stop buying ivory products. Much of the ivory that is poached is exported to Japan. "The groanings of creation are vividly felt in Africa," he told *The Christ Weekly*.

In 1990, when Pope John Paul issued his message on the World Day of Peace, Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation, the Bishops Committee on Social Affairs of

the Japan Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan responded by issuing a document called *The Earth Belongs to God and All of Creation: On Environmental Issues*, on October 4, 1992. Meanwhile, 13 people from Japan participated in the World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) held by the WCC in 1990.

On September 29, 1991, the southwest Tokyo district of the UCCJ held a Forum on the Global Environment and Christianity, with about 80 participants. Speakers discussed the use of solar energy and the necessity for churches to take seriously criticisms of Christianity from an ecological perspective.

In 1992, the late Seiko Akita of Tokyo YWCA represented Japan at the WCC's ecumenical meeting in Rio de Janeiro in parallel with the Earth Summit. She said afterwards, "Japan has enjoyed its prosperity and indifference to the crisis of the global environment, and the churches are seeking only their own salvation, but is that the way we really follow Jesus exactly the way he lived? I think I, as a Christian, would like to get involved in issues of the environment and poverty to follow Jesus."

The Japan YWCA was already active in addressing environmental issues. Mihoko Ejiri, its then president, said, "The YWCA decided at its National General Assembly ... that it would address environmental issues. It was not triggered by the Earth Summit, but was a result of our utmost and continuous efforts including anti-nuclear power campaigns since the 1970s, reviewing our lifestyles, minimizing disposals after use, effective recycling of resources, using natural products and so forth."

(i) Christian Communities in Japan Since the Earth Summit

The major environmental focus among Christian communities in Japan since the Earth Summit has been climate change, with the Third Conference of the Parties (COP3) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (the Kyoto Conference) providing major momentum. Delegates from the WCC and Franciscans International (FI) and their Japanese members, including the NCCJ, lobbied government delegates and held interfaith meetings on climate change, together with the Japan Committee of the World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP). Together they issued the Kyoto Appeal on Climate Change for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and simplicity of lifestyle. NCCJ, the Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace, and FI Japan have held follow-up events, although their efforts have been limited.

The Japan YWCA and local YWCAs have continued their efforts on the environment after the Earth Summit. The Japan YWCA held an Asia Regional Conference on the Environment on the theme of Women, the Environment and Development.

The Association to Protect the Forests of Papua New

Guinea and the Solomon Islands, established by Sister Yasuko Shimizu of the Society of Mercedarians and others, is working on the issue of tropical deforestation. It has held study meetings, study tours, on-site investigations, and negotiations with Japanese logging companies. "The problem is the system in which the weak are further deprived of what they have. It is important to have a sense of values for sharing the pain of all living things in a faraway country as your own and a way of life in food, clothing and shelter help local industries grow in your neighborhood," says Sister Shimizu.

Environmental issues have been featured in prayer meetings and worship services. In March 1992, the theme of the World Day of Prayer, which was held at 210 places in Japan, was Living Wisely With Creation. Asia Sunday 1993 had the theme Caring for God's Creation.

Some Christian organizations in Japan such as the Asian Rural Institute (ARI) (<http://www.ari.edu>) and Kobe Student Youth Center (<http://www.hyogo-iic.ne.jp/~rokko/>) provide education on sustainable agriculture without using chemicals and agricultural pesticides, and organic agriculture is practiced by some individual Christians in Japan. Moreover, a growing number of churches have become environmentally friendly during the past decade, by setting up recycling systems, using natural sources of energy, refraining from the use of tropical wood as much as possible, and looking for additional ways to improve the environment. Some churches and Christian organizations are actively involved in environmental movements and offering public environmental workshops and lectures.

In the field of education, some schools in Japan that are based on Christian principles have courses on environmental issues, and a slowly-but-steadily growing number of theologians in Japan are studying eco-theology. Moreover, some individual Christians in Japan work for environmental organizations, while others live environmentally friendly lifestyles in their local communities, workplaces and homes.

3. Conclusion

If Christians in Japan are to try to make a sustainable world (not necessarily sustainable development) a reality, our prayers, studies and actions themselves should be sustainable. We must remember that we have been given the ability and responsibility for this by God the Creator. We greatly appreciate all our readers' prayer, study, and action for restoring a sustainable world.

(Hisashi Yukimoto is the coordinator of Christian Eco-Network, and a member of the WCC Climate Change Network and Tokyo Union Church. This article is a translation in summary from the Japanese original, which appeared in the September 2002 issue of Fukuin to Sekai [Gospel and World].)

Environmental Programs of Tokyo YMCA

by Ayako Mishima

1. Introduction

"Excuse me, I'm looking for a town called Away" on this map, but I can't find it."

A boy holding a large map is asking an elderly man.

"You say you throw the garbage Away, but where is it? Is Away a big city, or is it in the country? I want to go there. Where is Away?"

This scene from the book *Revise, Recycle and Recover — Realizing our Resources* by Claudia E. Swain (published by Frost Valley) illustrates a major environmental problem of Japan today.

The earth's environment is intimately related to our contemporary Japanese lifestyle. When we talk about environmental problems, they not only include issues of preserving the natural environment, but range from such major issues as the amount of dioxin in the air to small-scale ones such as keeping local rivers and children's parks beautiful and clean.

But the problem is that people are simply not concerned. We now know that issues such as global warming have a great impact not only on humanity but on all living creatures, yet we still live in air-conditioned rooms and throw away large quantities of garbage without knowing where it goes.

2. Japanese Lifestyles

There is a total of 3,233 cities, towns and villages in Japan. Of these, 1,231, or 37.4%, are officially listed as sparsely populated. They occupy 48.1% of Japan's surface area, yet account for only 6.2% of the population. The situation is even worse when we look at the breakdown by age. The percentage of elderly people (over 65) living in under-populated areas is 25.1%, whereas in urban areas it is only 14.5%. (statistics on under-populated regions published in 1996) In other words, almost twice as many elderly people live in under-populated areas as in urban environments.

Just from looking around, it is clear that children in towns and cities are cut off from the natural world. Typically, Japanese children spend all their play-time immersed in TV and video games, and have no opportunity to engage with the natural world. A quarter of the total population of Japan lives within the greater Tokyo metropolitan area. In most of these households, fathers are employed by companies in Tokyo.

Most children in such families are born and raised in cramped high-rise apartments, surrounded by concrete and far from nature.

3. Mission of Tokyo YMCA

The mission of the Tokyo YMCA is as follows:

The Tokyo YMCA carries out activities which contribute to local communities in an attempt to create a just and peaceful world, in the hope that young people can achieve holistic development in spirit, mind, and body based on love and the spirit of service as exemplified by Jesus Christ.

Based on this mission, Tokyo YMCA maintains six centers (Kanda, Yamate, Toyochō, Koto, Minami, Nishi-Tokyo), two campsites (Nojiri, Yamanaka) and two training centers (Nobeyama, Myoko). It holds a wide variety of programs such as camping, day camps, LD supporting programs, support programs for challenging people, wellness, English classes, culture classes, colleges (English, hotel management, welfare, physical education), and child care. All these programs are rooted in our mission of enabling young people to achieve holistic development.

4. Environmental Education Programs of the YMCA

Educating children about the environment is extremely important, as this enables the development of informed attitudes of concern for environmental quality that will encourage people to engage in more pro-environmental behaviors. These include the advancement of knowledge and awareness of the environment, and creation of concern and motivation that will stimulate environmental action.

Tokyo YMCA has two environmental education programs. (1) We send about 10 people to Frost Valley YMCA for a training program on environmental education. (2) Young people become more aware of nature and learn to communicate and cooperate with others through hands-on experience in camps and day camps.

Through these programs, Tokyo YMCA intends to:

- develop self-confidence, self respect and appreciation for one's own worth;
- respect and appreciate the diversity of all humanity;
- promote the creation of partnerships that support positive change in our own communities and throughout the world;
- develop an appreciation for the natural environment and a commitment to stewardship of the earth's finite resources;



- visualize a positive future and develop the initiative and leadership necessary to accomplish this vision;
- celebrate the cultural and natural heritage of the region, encouraging opportunities that will cultivate a sense of place;
- sustain one's spirit, mind, and body in an atmosphere that fosters universal understanding guided by the YMCA's Judeo-Christian heritage of caring, respect, honesty and responsibility.

Reading books in classrooms surrounded by concrete walls only helps children cram theoretical knowledge. They will never know the warmth of the soil and the darkness of the night. But if children touch and feel the natural world, once they are aware that the creatures surrounding us are connected to us, and know how it feels to communicate and cooperate with others, they will learn to love the earth.

5. Future Perspectives

Environmental education in the YMCA does not involve cramming theoretical knowledge on ecology or science. By having a good time outdoors and by learning to communicate and trust others, children become aware that they are connected to all the lives (humanity, creatures, earth) that surround them, and thus may change their way of living. The effects of such environmental education today will only be fully seen when these children grow up, revealed in how they treat each other and the earth.

The Committee for Environmental Issues and Public Nuisances as an Environmental Program of the Japan Baptist Convention (JBC)

By Michio Hamano

Introduction

I would like to introduce the environmental program of the JBC. As background information, churches are not strong in Japan, because Christians account for just 0.86% of the population. The JBC is the third biggest Japanese Protestant denomination, but we have only about 33,000 members. Moreover, just as in all countries, not all Japanese Christians are progressive enough to concern themselves with environmental issues. Therefore, despite Japan's responsibility for the Asian environment, we cannot undertake large-scale projects such as producing ideal biotopes, farms, fishing grounds and so on. Our activity mainly centers on research into environmental issues and protests against the government and corporations, which often cause environmental problems. Perhaps this is more passive than creative, but I believe such activities are also important in our current situation. For this reason, I shall report here not on a single program of our committee, but introduce the committee itself as the JBC's environmental program.

History

In 1973, milk produced by the Morinaga company was contaminated with arsenic. This was a serious problem for Japan, which was then going through a period of rapid economic growth. In order to help the children who were victims of this poisoning, at its 27th General Assembly the JBC decided to form a committee for environmental issues and public nuisances. From the beginning, the committee has had the dual nature of a consumer movement and a protest association.

In 1974, the committee protested against the Kanemi Cooking Oil Company, which also caused a poisoning inci-

dent. The mass media reported our protest activity.

In 1975, the committee began to research the problem of nuclear power. Members visited the Genkai nuclear power plant in Kyushu and sent a protest note to the Japanese government and Saga Prefecture.

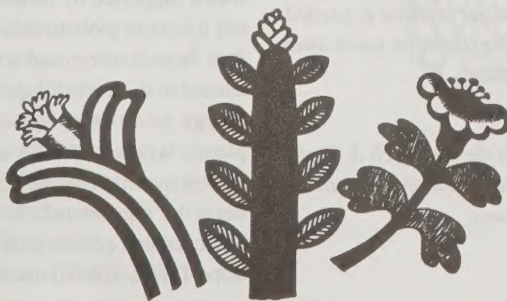
In 1976, the committee issued a statement opposing nuclear power plants that produce plutonium. In the same year, members went on a tour of inspection of the polluted Seto Inland Sea.

In 1981, the committee visited the former Ashio copper mine, the site of the first protest movement against environmental pollution in Japan. Since then, the committee has organized several tours to Ashio in order to stimulate members of JBC to think about the relationship between economic growth and environmental destruction.

In 1982, a prayer service against atomic weapons and nuclear power was held in Hiroshima, and a statement issued by participants. In the same year, the committee invited Mr. Guerra, an activist of the citizen's movement in the Philippines, to speak about environmental destruction in Leyte Island, for which Japanese companies were responsible. At that time, Japanese people did not know the reality of the export of environmental destruction from Japan to other Asian countries. Even now, it is difficult for Japanese people to obtain sufficient information on environmental problems caused by Japanese official development assistance (ODA) and other programs, because the government does not publish any detailed reports of what such programs actually do in Asian countries.

In 1983, some committee members visited Leyte Island. As a result, Rev. Odori, who participated in the tour, became the first chairperson of the Philippines Committee of the NCCJ. I myself, as a member of the JBC committee, attended the joint consultation held between NCC-Philippines and NCCJ on Mindanao in 1996. At that time, one of the most important debates was about Japanese and American ODA and environmental destruction. I planned a small-scale project with the Mindanao Baptist Convention at that time.

Since 1985, the committee has taken young members of the JBC to the Maruki Museum. Mr. and Ms. Maruki have drawn many pictures of the victims of Hiroshima, Nanjing, Korea, and Minamata.



In 1986, committee members visited Minamata, the site of one of the worst industrial diseases ever to affect Japan. They talked with the victims of mercury poisoning and issued a statement to the mass media. In the same year, they established five principles for their activities: forming networks against environmental destruction with the Church and the world; meeting the people on the ground; creating social solidarity against environmental destruction; thinking from not only a Japanese but also an Asian point of view; and establishing a theology opposed to environmental destruction. In addition, the committee began to hold classes in practical theology for the protection of the environment.

Opposition to Government Policy on Nuclear Energy

Since the 1990s, an important task for the committee has been to research and criticize the use of nuclear energy. Members visited the nuclear-waste recycling plant in Rokkasho and the so-called "high street" of nuclear plants in Fukui in 1990. In 1991 and 1997, they visited the facility for uranium enrichment in Ningyo Toge. In 1998, they visited an area set aside for building a nuclear plant in Kushima. In addition, they visited another designated area for a nuclear power plant in Kamiseki in 1999. In the same year, Japan's worst-ever nuclear accident took place in Tokaimura. Members of the committee and JBC staff visited churches in Tokaimura and attended an urgent meeting of a religious coalition against government policy on nuclear energy.

Cooperation with this coalition has become quite important for the committee. The coalition was established in 1993 by Buddhists, Christians and Shintoists. It has a degree of influence that enables it actually to affect Japanese policy. So far, it has published two books about the dangers of nuclear power.

Future Perspective

Japan is going through a recession, and JBC presently has financial difficulties. But this may offer a chance for Japan to think about the one thing needful for life. This is what our committee wants to make known.

The Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha! You are worried and troubled over so many things, but just one is needed. Mary has chosen the right thing, and it will not be taken away from her." (Lk 10:41-42)

Michio Hamano is a Researcher in the Research & Training Institute for Missions of JBC, and collaborates with the JBC Committee for Environmental Issues.

The Japan YWCA Movement to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and Phase Out Nuclear Power

by Reiko Yokota

The Japan YWCA began activities to promote the abolition of nuclear weapons and the phasing-out of nuclear power following the thermonuclear test carried out on Bikini Atoll by the USA in 1954. We issued a statement immediately after this test to the World YWCA. Japanese people were very shocked by the accident that resulted from this test, and the Japan YWCA took this seriously and appealed to the world to stop thermonuclear testing. The World YWCA Council of 1955 issued a resolution on peace in response to the 1954 statement from the Japan YWCA. The World YWCA Council of 1959 reconfirmed its opposition to nuclear tests in the name of God's peace and the power of reconciliation based on faith. In 1963, Ms. Ayako Sekiya addressed the issue of nuclear power at the World YWCA Council. She said, "Japanese people have a better awareness of the power of nuclear fission than you. So we want to appeal to you. We know energy is necessary to our everyday life. However, to easily accept the idea of the so-called peaceful use of nuclear power is very dangerous. Toxic substances generated by nuclear power are very harmful both to human beings and the natural environment. We should seriously take into consideration the effects of nuclear waste."

At the National Convention of the Japan YWCA in 1970, we expressed our stand against nuclear power and its symbolic meaning for society as the emphasis of our movement: "We stand on the idea of no nuclear power." In this context, we started the Pilgrimage to Hiroshima program in 1971. Whenever we look back at our refusal of nuclear power, Hiroshima is our starting point. Hiroshima is not just a past event, but presents a question to the future concerning how to regain the dignity of life and humanity.

As you know, modern civilization is devastating the Earth through mass production, conspicuous consumption and mass waste supported by nuclear energy. This tendency is increasing thanks to globalization. Moreover, environmental devastation is escalating and ever more serious damage is being caused to the environment by nuclear accidents. Using nuclear energy raises many questions, such as the safety of nuclear plants, workers' health at nuclear sites (including uranium mines) and radioactive pollution. Places once devastated can never be regenerated. We have come to realize that nuclear power cannot coexist with living beings on this earth. What we hope for as Christians is peaceful ecological coexistence



among God's creatures. Our lifestyle needs to be reexamined in light of this.

We at the Japan YWCA are currently challenged to embody our concept of refusing nuclear power. Our strategies in this direction consist mainly of three points. First is a grassroots movement by our members to reexamine our daily lives. Secondly, we are empowering our members to create a world without nuclear power. Finally, we should be able to offer an alternative energy plan to the government.

I would like to introduce our activities leading to a non-nuclear world.

In 1970, we adopted a policy of reexamining the quality of our lives and changing our lifestyles to impose less of a load on the environment. During the 1980s, we produced an eco-household account book to reflect the quality of our consumption, especially the reduction of electric power consumption. We have 27 local YWCAs at present in Japan. They hold a variety of programs related to the environment. For example Hiroshima YWCA sponsors a group to "Rethink the way we eat" that was set up about four years ago. It began when they were impressed by a book called *Motherhood Earth* (Ningen no Daichi) by Michiko Inukai. In this book, the author first deals with world hunger and refugee problems directly, and then moves on to their causes and background. In this context, the author points out the economic gap between the North and the South, and the problems of US-based multinational agribusinesses. YWCA members realized that the globalization of food destroys local self-sufficiency and local economies, as it demands homogeneity. Hiroshima is close to both the ocean and the mountains, and YWCA members there want to live a lifestyle appropriate to this environment. For this reason, they willingly buy local products even though they may be slightly more expensive. Using "Food" as its keyword, the group has concluded that it is important for us to look closely at peace, the environment, human rights and Hiroshima. Kyoto YWCA, Osaka YWCA and others run thrift shops, and Fukuoka YWCA has recently set up a fair trade shop. Hakodate YWCA built its office building with recycled wood. The Musashino Center, a branch of Tokyo YWCA, has

recently held study groups on endocrine disrupters and genetically modified foods. Its members are also taking up garbage problems related to electricity consumption. As we examine our activities in the light of our opposition to nuclear power, most YWCAs are focusing on issues related to food, agriculture, and ecosystems. However, some YWCAs located near nuclear power plants or ports where nuclear-powered ships make port calls are acting directly to oppose nuclear energy. These include the Shizuoka, Fukushima, Hirosaki, Hakodate, and Shonan YWCAs.

We are continuing to strive for a world without nuclear power. We are also trying to influence the government to change Japan's energy policy. The Japanese government is taking a stand as a leader on the issue of abolishing nuclear weapons in the international community. Nevertheless, the government relies on the US nuclear umbrella and seems to condone a preemptive nuclear attack by the USA. We are putting forward ideas from Japanese citizens to the government for the proposed Japanese draft resolution on nuclear disarmament at the United Nations General Assembly, the so-called "Path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons" that is presently under preparation by the government.

Recently the Japanese Diet has passed a basic national energy law. The main purpose of this law is to promote the construction of nuclear plants and put the brakes on the use of natural energy, such as solar and wind power. We opposed this law and tried to prevent its passage.

When we take a global look at the issue of nuclear power, the phasing out of nuclear energy seems to be a worldwide trend. Our government is therefore going against the stream. Japanese companies that sell nuclear plants are intending to market them to Asian countries in order to make a profit. However, ordinary Japanese today tend not to be interested in the issue of nuclear power. They do not like to get involved in nuclear matters, so we failed to obtain their support for our efforts to oppose this law. We should reexamine our strategies and work out how to appeal to the general public, most of whom prefer an easy life.



Manushi, No 61

The Human Environment in Crisis: Focus on Chemical Pollutants

by Koa Tasaka

1. Paradise Lost: Artificial Chemicals in Our Environment

The earth's wonderful ecosystem, with so many varieties of lives under the order of God's creation, has now been polluted and destroyed by artificial chemicals such as DDT and PCB, as well as by compounds unintentionally produced by burning PVC in incinerators or by industry processes, such as dioxins or organo-mercury compounds. The human environment is in crisis as a result of these chemicals. This "environment" includes our bodies, as these chemicals are taken into our bodies and threaten the the transfer of life to the next generation as well as our own health. Dioxins, PCB, and DDT do not easily decompose and remain for a long time in our body and in the environment. They are therefore called POPs or Persistent Organic Pollutants.

In 1996, Theo Colborn, Dianne Dumanoski and John Peterson Myers published the book *Our Stolen Future*, and it became widely known that these chemicals in the mother's womb act on the fetus as "pseudo hormones" to cause serious negative effects. The book cites many studies to show that even a very minute amount of these artificial chemicals in the environment can threaten living creatures, including humans. The authors started from the hypothesis that there should be a common cause for the deaths of so many animals in the North Sea, abnormalities of sex organs in male alligators, decreased male sperm counts, and endometriosis and cervical cancer among young women. They searched through a large volume of scientific and medical literature, and found the following facts. The fetus of many animals, including humans, receives the secretion of hormones in the mother's womb at very delicate timing so as to grow normally. If the fetus is exposed to too much female hormone, or for a prolonged time, its differentiation into male or female, and the development of its sex organs, are disturbed. Also, studies show that immunological functions and brain development are retarded by chemicals such as DDT, PCB, or dioxins. They are called "endocrine disrupters."

As hormones can affect the fetus even in minute amounts, chemicals exist in the environment or our bodies at a sufficient level to disturb the fetus in the womb. How did these chemicals come into our body? Let us focus on pesticides.

2. Environmental Pollution by Pesticides

(a) Development of DDT

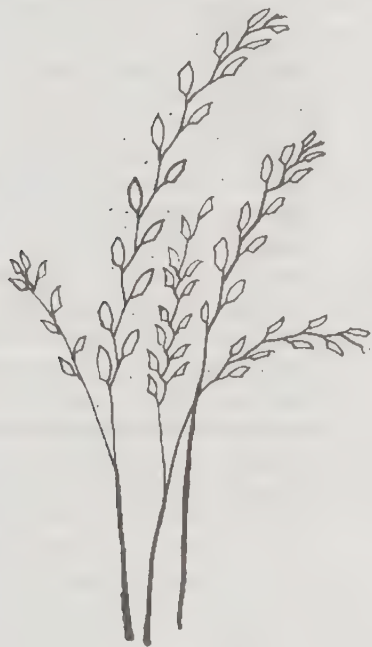
DDT was synthesized in the 19th century, but its insecticidal property was discovered by Muller in 1939. This was the year when Hitler invaded Poland and the Second World War started. In 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and declared war on the US, Britain, and their allies. At the same time, the Japanese army landed on the Malay Peninsula and Southeast Asia became a battlefield. In this area, many soldiers died of malaria. In order to protect soldiers from malaria, the US started large-scale production of DDT and used it to eradicate the mosquitoes which carry malaria. DDT was highly effective. The US force that came to Japan after the war brought DDT to Japan, and used it to eradicate hygienically harmful insects such as mosquitoes and flies. As DDT has low acute toxicity, i.e., the toxicity to kill the experimental animals within 48 hours when the substance is administered in food, people thought of it as a safe pesticide. It was sprayed on the heads of Japanese people to kill lice, and an advertisement even showed DDT being sprayed over American children eating lunch.

The insecticidal effect of DDT was initially amazing. For example, in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), 1.5 million people contracted malaria and 80,000 died between 1934 and 1935, before the introduction of DDT. In contrast, from 1963 to 1964 when DDT was widely used, there were only 17 cases of malaria in the whole country. However, after a while DDT-resistant mosquitoes emerged, and it was no longer possible to eradicate malaria by using DDT.

(b) Silent Spring and Contamination of Breast Milk with Pesticides.

In 1962, Rachel Carson published *Silent Spring*, in which she warned people of the danger of using pesticides like DDT without considering their adverse effects. She pointed out that in areas where DDT and other insecticides were sprayed, the bird population declined, because robins, for example, eat earthworms contaminated with pesticides which affect the reproductive capability of the birds. Studies have also shown that egg shells become thinner when a small amount of DDT is added to the feed given to birds (*Scientific American* 4: 73 [1970]).

Pesticides like DDT do not dissolve in water, but accumulate in living bodies, and are concentrated through the food chain. Because human beings are at the top of the food chain, we also accumulate these chemicals at a high concentration. When women become pregnant, these chemicals are transferred to the fetus, or into babies through their mothers' milk. DDT, BHC, and several other pesticides were banned for use in food production in Japan in 1971, but even four years after the ban, pesticide contamination of breast milk was still at a dangerous level.



DDT, BHC, and PCB contain C-Cl bonds in their chemical structure, and so are called "organo-chlorine compounds." All are artificial chemicals that have never before existed in the environment or our bodies throughout the long history of life on earth. So, our bodies can neither decompose nor excrete them. Because they are fat-soluble, they are accumulated in fat, and move into the fetus together with nutrients. As some of these chemicals disturb hormonal activity, and have adverse effects on the fetus at extremely low levels, it is quite a dangerous situation for future generations.

(c) (i) *Impact of Japanese ODA on the Asian Environment: The Case of Cambodia*

In January 1993, the Japan Overseas Christian Medical Services (JOCS) sent a couple of ICU graduates to Cambodia. Upon their arrival at Phnom Penh, they saw an article in the *Phnom Penh Post* entitled "Japan's Pesticide Package May Kill More Than Bugs." Shocked by its content, they faxed me a copy. As this was a serious issue, I made a thorough investigation of the matter, and discovered the following. In June 1992, the Japanese government promised to donate a total of 500 million yen's worth of chemical fertilizer, agricultural equipment and pesticides (30 tons worth 100 million yen) under the so-called "Second Kennedy Round" (2KR) program which aimed to promote food production in developing countries. Although the package was donated to the Cambodian government, the aid materials were not distributed free to the farmers, but were sold instead. The pesticides sent "at the request of the Cambodian government" included Sumithion, Diazinon and Sumicidine. The first two are organo-phosphate insecticides. NGOs working in Cambodia in areas such as agriculture, envi-

ronment, health, and education, as well as experts from international organization such as the FAO, jointly criticized Japan's 2KR program for the following reasons. (1) The pesticides may cause health problems among farmers. (2) They may poison and kill valuable protein sources such as fish, shrimp, or frogs. (3) They kill the predators of harmful insects as well as the insects themselves, and thus may cause an outbreak of harmful insects resistant to the pesticides. (4) Because they are sold, corruption among government officers will increase.

From July to August 1993, I visited Cambodia at the invitation of JVC. Farmers were using a deadly poisonous insecticide, parathion methyl (trade name Folidol) without protective gear. The bottle carries a short explanation in Thai and English, but not in the Khmer language. It is produced by Beyer, a German pharmaceutical company, and imported to Thailand. A farmer told me that he had headaches, but had not visited a doctor. We also heard from villagers that dead fish floating in a pond near sprayed fields were pulled out by children, who cooked and ate them. I then visited Mr. Imagawa, Japanese Ambassador to Cambodia, and requested that the Japanese government reconsider its pesticide donation program, explaining the situation I had observed. He promised to report this to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MoFA).

In Japan, several NGOs which were cooperating in the reconstruction of Cambodia after the civil war jointly formed a network called "People's Forum on Cambodia" in September 1993. Mr. Ohtori Kurino, a former Japanese Ambassador to Cambodia, kindly joined us as its representative. This was advantageous to us, because the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot easily ignore us. The Japanese media took up this issue as news, and put pressure on the Japanese government to reconsider its pesticide aid to developing countries like Cambodia.

On July 28th, 1994, the *Mainichi Daily News* reported that "JICA admits sending agro-chemicals to Cambodia was a mistake." On August 4, the same newspaper reported "Cambodia farm aid cut." MoFA had finally decided to stop sending pesticides to Cambodia.

It was a victory for a grass-roots movement over the Japanese Official Development Aid (ODA) program. According to a report titled "Bilateral Donor Agency and the Environment—Pest and Pesticide Management" written by Richard Tobin for USAid in December 1996, the Cambodian case was exceptional, because the Japanese government rarely reconsiders its ODA program once it has been decided. Although pesticide aid to Cambodia was stopped, the Japanese government has been sending pesticides to many African countries.

(c) (ii) *Impact of Japanese ODA on the African Environment: The Case of Mozambique*

On April 29, 2002, the *Daily Yomiuri* reported "Unwanted aid sent to Mozambique—stockpiled agricultural chemicals

polluting environment, NGO says." The newspaper gave my name and comment as an NGO representative, but actually the FAO has published a report on the stockpiling of obsolete pesticides in African countries, including Mozambique. This report includes pictures with explanations. In August 2001, a group of people working with NGOs in Mozambique sent an open letter to Ms. Makiko Tanaka, at that time Minister of Foreign Affairs, asking why the Japanese government has continued sending pesticides and chemical fertilizers since 1988, when the country was still in civil war. They also asked about the stockpiling of unused pesticides that are becoming obsolete. In November, I was asked to join their meeting with MoFA as a person with some knowledge of pesticides. MoFA's answer was far from satisfactory. Since 1990, the amount of 2KR for African countries has exceeded that for Asian countries, and the percentage of pesticides in the package is 50% for Africa compared with only 5% for Asian countries. We therefore formed an NGO network on 2KR, and pressured MoFA to change its policy. We asked, through a Diet member, why MoFA did not change its policy on 2KR for Africa when it admitted its error in sending pesticides to Cambodia in 1994. It was clear that this aid was not intended to benefit African people, but was for the profit of businesses in Japan and government officers of the recipient country. The FAO joined us in pressuring MoFA, and the Japanese government finally decided to offer 100 million yen to request the FAO to provide technical assistance in cleaning up the stockpile of pesticides. We should keep watching MoFA to make sure that it really changes its policies, in order to provide sustainable and ecologically sound assistance to developing countries.



this project by providing loans for the irrigation needed to ensure the high yield, and in fact the per-hectare yield became much higher where the high-yielding varieties (HYV) were introduced.

However, three big problems occurred with the introduction of HYV. First, a high yield can be achieved only when a large amount of nitrogen fertilizer is applied, and pesticides must be used to protect the plants as they are more susceptible to insect pests. Actually, seeds of HYV were distributed together with chemical fertilizer and insecticides, and the promotion of new varieties meant greater sales of chemicals for US companies. Insecticides killed the predators of the pests, and the remaining harmful insects developed resistance to the insecticides, leading to pest outbreaks that destroyed rice over large areas. In order to combat such outbreaks, more insecticides were applied, leading to the over-use of pesticides and environmental pollution.

Secondly, only rich farmers could afford to buy such chemicals and seeds. Rich people therefore became richer, while the poor farmers like landless people or plantation workers did not reap the benefits of HYV. Thus, the green revolution promoted an increased gap between rich and poor, and the problem of hunger was not solved after all.

The third problem was that the yield was very high only during the initial stage, and gradually became lower in later years. As Mr. Paiboon of Thailand pointed out, "Farmers have to sell 2 kg of rice in order to buy 1 kg of fertilizer. Under the name of development, farmers became more dependent on the outside market." The green revolution made Thailand the world's number one country in rice production and export, but farmers went deeper into debt while business people became very rich.

(b) The Success of IPM in Indonesia

The Indonesian government introduced HYVs hoping to increase rice production and to attain self-sufficiency in rice, but suffered from outbreaks of harmful insects. In order to control the insects, government encouraged farmers to use insecticides by giving subsidies for their purchase during the early 1980s. This policy was ineffective, however. Facing this situation, President Suharto asked the FAO to send an expert on insect control. The FAO sent Dr. Peter Kenmore, a former researcher with IRRI. In his time at IRRI, he found that although insect populations decrease after the use of insecticides, there are soon outbreaks of pest insects that have developed resistance. This phenomenon is called resurgence, and it cannot be controlled by spraying more insecticides. Dr.

4. From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained: The Development of Organic Farming in Asia

(a) Light and Shadow of the Green Revolution

The introduction of high-yielding varieties of agricultural crops, called the "Green Revolution," started in Asia in 1960 when the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, together with the US government, set up the IRRI (International Rice Research Institute) in Los Banos, Philippines. IRRI, aiming to increase rice production and liberate people from hunger, developed new varieties of rice with a yield twice or even three times higher than traditional ones, and distributed these throughout Asia starting from the Philippines. The World Bank joined

Kenmore developed an integrated method of pest control without the use of insecticides. Therefore, when he was invited by the Indonesian government, what he did at first was to advise Suharto to ban the use of 57 insecticides out of 63 then registered. He then organized nationwide training of farmers in how to control harmful insects in their paddy fields without relying on insecticides, how to recognize harmful insects and predators, and so on. As a result, the outbreak of brown planthoppers subsided, and production of rice increased 16% (*The Japan Times*, May 12, 1992). The amount of pesticide used has decreased from 14,200 tons in 1986 to 5800 tons in 1987, and the Indonesian government thus saved 50 million dollars in national expenditure. This method, called IPM (Integrated Pest Management) was therefore proven to be ecological in controlling brown planthoppers without much use of pesticides, and at the same time economical in reducing expenditure by farmers as well as the government.

(c) A Thai Farmer Who Escaped from Debt Through Organic Farming

Most Thai farmers borrow money to buy seeds, chemical fertilizers and pesticides when they are going to plant rice. In years of good harvest, however, the price of rice goes down, and they retain only a very small income after returning the money with interest. When drought or flood reduce the rice yield, only debt remains. In this way, Thai farmers fall into the "hell of debt." The insecticides used most widely in Thailand are organic phosphates such as methyl parathion (trade name Folidol, produced by Beyer Co. of Germany), or phosdrin (trade name mevinphos, produced by Shell Co. of the USA), which are both extremely toxic chemicals.

In July 1999, I visited NGOs in Thailand that are promoting organic farming (farming without the use of pesticides or other chemicals). An NGO called TREE, located in Supan Buri, 200 km northwest of Bangkok, has been promoting sustainable agriculture by the use of neem trees, marigold flowers or lemon grass to protect plants from harmful insects. Mr. Daycha, the leader of the NGO, advises farmers to produce food mainly for their own consumption, and only to sell it when they have a surplus. One farmer, called Chayaboon, followed Mr. Daycha's advice and succeeded in breaking out of the "hell of debt." He became famous because the King of Thailand acknowledged him as a model for farmers. When Mr. Daycha took me to visit him and his field, there were enough predators in his paddy field to protect the rice plants.

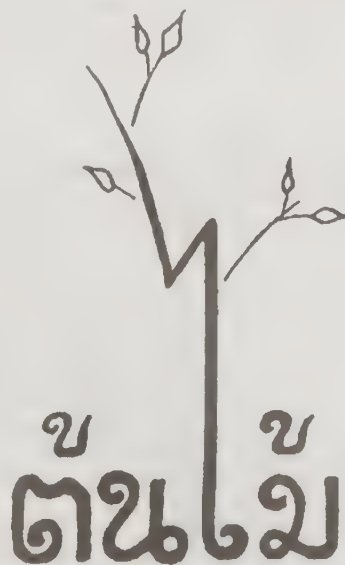
In Chiangmai, Mr. Chomchuan, a graduate of the ARI (Asian Rural Institute), is promoting organic farming through the Institute for Sustainable Agriculture Community (ISAC). When I visited this NGO in July 2002, he was organizing villagers in Faan District in order to protest against a large corporation which had bought a significant area of land and planted an orange orchard. They spray pesticides over the orange trees, and the pesticides were drifting to the area in which villagers

are living or cultivating their food. I also attended several meeting of the villagers, and found a young Buddhist monk who had joined the movement. The police or military would not attack them if a Buddhist monk, who is highly respected among the people, is among them. I felt that this type of grass-roots movement will offer strong resistance against socio-economic systems under the control of the WTO.

(d) Organic Certification System Started by Malaysian Government and NGOs

On August 13, 2002, a seminar on the introduction of organic certification was held in Kuala Lumpur, sponsored the Malaysian government in cooperation with three NGOs. Government officials explained the certification system for organic agricultural products, but it was clear that the government must rely on NGOs for practical training. One of the three NGOs was CETDEM (Centre for Environment, Technology & Development, Malaysia), which has been playing a key role in promoting organic agriculture in Malaysia. Ms. Siew Luang Thang, an ARI graduate, has been involved in the development of organic farming in Malaysia through CETDEM, together with her husband, who is a representative of this NGO. She has published a book on organic farming, including methods of making compost, in English as well as in Chinese. Although organic farmers are a very small minority in Malaysia, the role of NGOs that can provide technical support and training for organic farming will become enormous as the Malaysian government has officially decided to start an organic certification system in that country.

Koa Tasaka is Director of the Asian Rural Institute, Nishinasuno, Japan. See their website at: <http://www.ari.edu>



Jesus Christ, Life of the World

News from the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions

Interreligious Studies in Japan Program (ISJP)

Our new Interreligious Studies in Japan Program (ISJP) was inaugurated on November 8. At the request of the Evangelisches-Missionswerk in Southwest Germany (EMS), Martin Repp has been preparing this new program since spring, and two students enrolled for the autumn term. The idea is, briefly speaking, that theological students and future teachers of religion in Europe will benefit from the Japanese Christians experiences of being Christians in a multi-religious situation. ISJP is organized as a balanced mixture of formal education by specialists in Shinto, New Religions, Christianity, various Buddhist sects, and first hand experience through fieldtrips. Part of the program is organized in collaboration with the Tomisaka Christian Center in Tokyo. Because the teachers are from well established universities, the aim is that European universities will give credit for grades obtained here.

We anticipate more students in the future. Those who are with us now, a Korean Protestant and a German Catholic, are happy with the program.

Yagi Seiichi

As part of the inauguration of the ISJP, Professor Seiichi Yagi from Tokyo was invited to give two lectures: one in German for the students, and one in Japanese open to the public. Professor Yagi aims at developing a formal description of

Christian and Buddhist teachings that will facilitate further dialogue among them.

Residential seminars

In September we organized a seminar in English. The topic was "Christianity in Kyoto—Continuations of History." We visited Christian institutions in Kyoto and invited people involved in Christian education, social work, worship and aesthetics to discuss the present and future situation of Christianity.

In October we had a seminar in Japanese. The title was "Learning from Rennyo, the reformer of True Pure Land Buddhism." We stayed at Nishi Honganji Yamashina Betsuin temple, and heard thoughtful lectures on the methods Rennyo used during the 1450s to rejuvenate and organize a lay-Buddhist movement that eventually became and still is the biggest Buddhist group in Japan.

Recent initiatives

The NCC Center has been instrumental in starting a group which aims at establishing a exhibition and resource center on Christianity and Christian Culture in Kyoto. Kyoto is renowned as a city of religion and history, yet Christianity is almost absent from any ordinary presentation of or tour in the city. Since the first church was established here over four hundred years ago, we think this gap needs to be filled.

Interreligious dialogue is important, we believe, but inter denominational dialogue also has our attention. Recently Pastor Higuchi Susumu of the United Church of Christ in Japan gave a presentation on the imposition of hands for fully ordained pastors. From this starting point we discussed the different understandings within Christianity, but thanks to our non-Christian participants the discussion also included similar ceremonies in various Buddhist denominations.

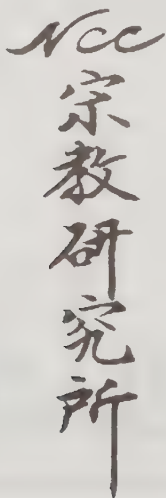
Web site

The Study Center's Web site is now online at:

<http://www.japanese-religions.org>

Dr. Christian M. Hermansen

Associate Director



Obituaries



Ayako Sekiya

Ms. Ayako Sekiya, a well known Christian peace and anti-nuclear activist, died on October 13, 2002 at the age of 87. Her outstanding contributions to the cause of international peace included appointments as the chairperson of the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs and curator of the Maruki Museum, world-famous for its depictions of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Nanking Massacre and others. Ms. Sekiya was a member of the World Peace Appeal Seven-Person Committee and the chair of the Chernobyl Project of the NCCJ, as well as a former president of the Japan YWCA.

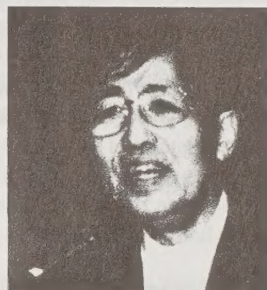
Her husband, the late Mitsuhiro Sekiya, was a professor at International Christian University. Ms. Sekiya was a daughter of the first Japanese Education Minister, Mr. Arinori Mori. Her elder brother, the late Mr. Arimasa Mori was a well known philosopher and a scholar of French literature.

Ms. Sekiya was a tireless and passionate advocate of peace, and her presence especially at this time is sorely missed.

Kuniyasu Take

Professor Kuniyasu Take, Associate Director of the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions for many years, died in July 2002 at the age of 68.

He was a dedicated scholar at Doshisha Women's College and a very active pastor in the United Church of Christ. His field of speciality was the sociology of religion. He also worked as a co-editor of the *Kirisuto Shimbun* and was actively involved in many other areas. Among his responsibilities at the NCC Study Center, Professor Take was assistant editor of its Japanese-language journal *Deai*, organizer of the annual



residential seminar in Japanese and head of a study group on "Ancestor Worship - Funeral and Memorial Services." Professor Take was preparing an edited volume of presentations from the study group when he passed away. He is greatly missed by his colleagues at the Study Center.

Yayori Matsui

Yayori Matsui, a journalist and campaigner for the rights of Asian women who often worked closely with NCCJ, died of liver cancer on December 27, 2002 at the age of 68.

Ms. Matsui was born in Kyoto to parents who were both Christian missionaries. Her parents later moved to Tokyo and founded Yamate Christian Church in the ruins of the war-devastated city. Ms. Matsui became a journalist and worked for 30 years for the *Asahi Shimbun* newspaper, starting in the 1960s. She wrote articles on the environment, Asian affairs and women's issues, and was the first woman in Japan to become a senior staff writer.

In 1976, she founded Asian Women in Solidarity, a grassroots organization that grew out of opposition to "sex tourism" conducted for rich Japanese men visiting other Asian countries. This eventually led to the establishment in 1995 of the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center in Tokyo, which researches women's issues, publishes a magazine, conducts seminars and sponsors lectures by Asian feminists.

Ms. Matsui was constantly at the forefront of activities to force the government to make school textbooks deal more objectively with the realities of World War II. She was a tireless advocate of compensation for the so-called "comfort women" forced into sexual slavery for the Japanese army. Another organization she founded, the Violence Against Women in War Network Japan, was a principal sponsor of the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal held in Tokyo in 2000. The symbolic Tribunal found Emperor Hirohito ultimately responsible for the policy that allowed the enslavement of women, and also convicted other wartime leaders for crimes against

humanity for their participation in the system.

Her influence extended to the Japanese language: she is credited with introducing the word *kaishun* ("buying spring") to describe prostitution, in contrast with the traditional Japanese term *baishun* ("selling spring"). She argued forcefully that many women are forced into prostitution, and that the traditional Japanese use of language ignores the men who exploit such women by making prostitution seem solely the women's action. Many progressive Japanese now use her terminology.

I Can No Longer Be With You

A painful message to all my friends from Yayori Matsui

Today I have to send a painful message to all my friends who have been my support in life in many ways and at different times. When I was visiting Afghanistan early this month, I felt anomaly in my body and I returned to Japan on October 7, earlier than scheduled, to be examined at a hospital. There, I was diagnosed with liver cancer in the advanced stage and informed that it was not curable.

This summer I attended several international meetings and conferences in various countries. I was as energetic as I enjoyed horse riding in the grasslands in Mongolia in August and swimming in Islamabad on my way to Kabul early this month. I felt no symptom, but my liver had been silently affected by this disease over the years.

I wished to live at least 10 more years, and I feel really unfortunate to have to leave you in the midst of struggle. I feel as though I was abruptly hit by a natural disaster. However, I try to maintain serenity and accept this fate as divine providence caring to give me a little early rest in sympathy for my 68 years of intense life.



Ms. Matsui's final legacy will be her proposed Women's Museum on War in Tokyo, set to open in 2006. The museum will include a library and video archive documenting the fate of the "comfort women" and violence against women everywhere.

Before she died, Ms. Matsui sent a message to her friends and supporters worldwide, which we reprint below.

I can stay calm because I feel that I have been able to lead a meaningful life thanks to the support of all of you. It is my great comfort, in particular, that the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal 2000 of which I was one of the initiators was successfully carried out and that it handed down its judgment of historic significance at the Hague in 2001. I sincerely ask all of you to make the best use of the judgment and promote the tribunal's message across the world.

The Japanese media not only ignored the historical event of this tribunal and its judgment, but also NHK, the public TV station, broadcasted a programme on it that distorted the meaning of the tribunal. As you may know, we sued NHK to hold it accountable for falsification of the tribunal's message. I deeply regret that I will not be able to fulfil my responsibility as a plaintiff in this litigation. I wish for your continuing support of our NHK lawsuit to seek a just judgment.

I look back on my three decades of involvement in Asian issues, as a journalist at the Asahi Shimbun and as a women's movement activist throughout the decades, and I realize anew how greatly I have been encouraged and inspired by encounters with powerful women of many Asian countries I visited. I can think of my life positively when I hear young Japanese women working in different Asian countries telling me that my books or speeches motivated and inspired them to get involved in what they do. I would feel rewarded if my trajectory of life as a feminist and independent woman has encouraged and stimulated many women to fight to change this sexist society.

I admit there were moments when I felt deeply hurt and agonized by betrayals, misunderstanding, persecution, and violence. Now, those days seem far away in the past. I feel most proud of having always been on the side of "the least important" underprivileged people and resisted those in power. I used to write a newspaper column using "Flame" as the pen name, and signed my magazine articles as Suga Akiko, an amalgam name made from two rebellious Meiji women, to express my commitment to fight discrimination, exploitation,

and injustice. My life has been a life of action propelled by outrage and anger against injustice. I have been offered no official or social status of power, and I take that as an honor.

Aside from the four years of illness in my high school years, I have been always blessed in my life. I grew up in a warm family, received much love and affection from many people, and enjoyed the friendship of a number of wonderful friends. I have lived freely, traveled to so many countries, and enjoyed movies which I love so much.

However, I am profoundly concerned about the current global situation. Many people are affected by armed conflicts and the "war on terrorism" is expanding. Having lived through the 20th century which was filled with violence and war, I am hoping for a peaceful, non-violent 21st century. I regret that I can no longer be with you in the struggle for this goal, but I am sure that you will carry on this struggle and will achieve the peace that is my dream.

I am sorry that I cannot pursue any more the various kinds of activities to which I have been committed. Especially, as Director of Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center (AJWRC) and Chairperson of Violence Against Women in War Network, Japan (VAWW-NET Japan), I want to extend my deep appre-

ciation to their members and I wish for further development of their activities. I ask you all, my friends, to provide continued support for AJWRC and VAWW-NET Japan. I will also leave to all of you the dream that I have shared with my friends - the establishment of a "Women's Museum on War."

I cannot help feeling uneasy, though, anticipating physical pains and psychological fears that I must have to endure from now. I will do my best to live as long as possible, by a day or even an hour. Please save a place in your prayers for a miracle. During the time that is left to me, with my last physical and mental strength, I will try to write and speak what I want to tell.

Now, I want to apologize to those whom I may have hurt or caused any trouble to. Friends, I ask for your forgiveness for having not been able to make time to talk more personally with you due to my extremely busy life. Once again, please accept my heartfelt gratitude to all of you for giving me such a wonderful life. I am truly thankful.

With many thanks from the bottom of my heart,

Yayori Matsui

October 14, 2002

Subscription Renewal Form

JCAN is a triannual, sometimes quarterly newsletter that often appears as a double issue. It is produced by an editorial staff made up entirely of volunteers. We apologize for the delay in sending out the current issue.

Cost per year: US\$20 or ¥2000. For countries other than the US or Japan, email JCANed@aol.com for cost.

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NCC-J Calendar Highlights

2002

August

- 5-8 13th Seminar: Human Rights Education for Christian Schools.
- 12-14 40th National Youth Assembly of the Japan Baptist Convention
- 15 Prayer Meeting for Peace (Chidorigafuchi)
- 26 Tokyo District Court trial of Ms. Yoko Fukuoka (Christian) who refused to play the *Kimigayo* Anthem
- 30-Sept 1 Peace Caravan

September

- 8 Interfaith Prayer Meeting for Peace on the occasion of the first anniversary of September 11
(Tsukiji Honganji Buddhist Temple)
- 9 Third Ecumenical Youth Gathering (Japan YWCA)
- 23-27 CCA-NCCJ Environmental Training Workshop(Ranzan, Saitama)
- 23-25 National Consultation of Urban and Rural Missions (Kobe)

October

- 8-11 NCC Korea- NCCJ Christian Joint Seminar on Disabled Persons
- 18 Urgent meeting with Diet members to demand the withdrawal of three Emergency Legislation Bills
- 23 Demonstration for the withdrawal of Emergency Legislation bills in front of the Diet

November

- 10-17 NCCJ Disabled Persons' Week

December

- 13 Caroling for Peace in Shibuya

2003

January

- 18 Peace Action (Hibiya Park)
- 20 Meeting in Diet building to demand the withdrawal of Emergency Legislation Bills

February

- 15 Emergency Rally to oppose US attack on Iraq (Miyashita Park in Shibuya)
- 28 Ecumenical Orientation meeting for new seminary graduates organized by the Division of Christian Education



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